

# Clifton News

No 273 April - June 2016

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Easter Holiday Club



# News

## Easter Holiday Club

The Lord answered prayer when many of the holiday club leaflets were accepted by the schools in the area. As it is her Majesty the Queen's 90th birthday this year, we had the theme of Kings and Queens of the Bible, looking at David, Solomon, Josiah, Esther and the Lord Jesus, the King of kings. From the feedback we received, the children really enjoyed it and paid good attention to the Bible stories and the serial story "Where the river begins"

Many schools had activities on at the same time so numbers were slightly lower than the previous year but we rejoice that 65 different children came and there were over 90 people in the hall during prize giving night including around 57 children and 19 parents who heard the gospel preached. We thank everyone who has prayed for us.

\*\*\*\*\*

Application has been made for a stall at the South Norwood Festival on Sunday July 10th and we value prayer for an open door to share the gospel to the thousands of visitors there.

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We congratulate Mark & Anne Marie Beardall on the birth of their daughter Rose-Marie Leannah born on 12th January weighing 7lbs 13oz. Mark will be taking a break from writing our church history articles. In its place we begin a new series looking at God's wonderful design in Creation.



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# Meetings

## THE WEEK AT CLIFTON

### Lord's Day

Breaking of Bread	11.00 am
Family Service	4:00 pm

### Monday

Prayer & Ministry	8.00 pm
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### Wednesday

Seekers Club	6:30 pm
(Term time only for under 10s)	

### Friday

Friday Club	7:30 pm
(Term time only for 10+)	

## SUNDAY AFTERNOON FAMILY SERVICE

### April

3	Mike Surry
10	Andrew Hall
17	Richard Catchpole
24	Nitish Patel

### May

1	Nitish Patel
8	Phil Briercliffe
15	Alf Taylor
22	Alastair Rodger
29	Nitish Patel

## **June**

- 5 Mike Surry
- 12 Nathan Taylor
- 19 Norman Gibbons
- 26 Nitish Patel

## **MONDAY PRAYER AND MINISTRY**

## **April**

- 4 David Penfold
- 11 David Penfold
- 18 Nitish Patel
- 25 Nitish Patel

## **May**

- 2 Bank holiday - no meeting
- 9 Timothy Miller
- 16 Timothy Miller
- 23 Richard Catchpole
- 30 Bank holiday - no meeting

## **June**

- 6 David Willis
- 13 David Willis
- 20 Colin Roberts
- 27 Colin Roberts

# Question Box

Answers to Questions asked by the young people in Friday Club.



*When we die, will we go straight to heaven or hell?*

It's so important to think about what happens to us after we die; after all it's something that will happen to all of us. If we all knew that we were going to have to abseil down the Shard next week, we'd spend the rest of the week getting over our fear of heights and finding out how to abseil.

So if we know we're all going to die at some point, we really ought to think about what will happen to us and where will we go. Fortunately we don't have to travel far and wide to find the answers to these most important questions, they can all be found in the Bible.

The answer to our question is yes; when we die we will go straight to either heaven or hell.

We can see how the gospel of Luke tells us this. In chapter 16, Jesus tells the story of the rich man and Lazarus. Both men die and in verse 22, Lazarus is "carried by the angels to Abraham's side" (heaven), while in verse 23 the rich man is found "in Hades, being in torment" (hell). There's no mention of a gap between death and entering heaven or hell. Notice verse 26 too, there's no opportunity to pass from heaven to hell or indeed from hell to heaven.

Still in Luke's gospel, we can turn to chapter 23 and learn about the repentant criminal crucified with Christ. He repents from his sin and calls upon the Lord Jesus, believing in Him. What is Jesus' response to this dying man? "Today you will be with me in Paradise."

The promise of Jesus was that he would be with Him. Where Jesus was, the man would be and Jesus would be in Paradise (heaven). Also, Jesus promised that the man would be with Him in Paradise today. The man was going to die that day, he was being crucified, and when he died, he would go straight to heaven.

This truth is reiterated, by the apostle Paul. In 2 Corinthians chapter 5, he tells of his longing for heaven. He writes of his current condition

as being “at home in the body...away from the Lord”, but he “would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord”. When he dies (goes away from the body), he know he will be in heaven (at home with the Lord). Like the repentant criminal in Luke 23, Paul knew that he would be with his Lord immediately after he died.

There are only two places we can go to after we die, there are only two ways that we can be on in this life (Matthew 7:13-14) and there are only two states that we can be in before God, either having eternal life or being under the wrath of God (John 3:36).

How can we have eternal life, how can we be on the way to life, how can we know we will be in heaven when we die? As John 3:36 tells us, we need to believe in the Son. Just like Lazarus did, just like the criminal on the cross did and just like Paul did on the road to Damascus. The Lord Jesus is “the way, and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (John 14:6)

This question, when asked at Friday club, could have arisen after somebody had heard about purgatory. Purgatory is a doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church that teaches that some “after death ... undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, Paragraph 1030).

Nowhere in the Bible is purgatory taught explicitly, as we have seen, there are only two place we can go and we'll go straight there. Purgatory also implies that 1) Christ's death was not enough to cleanse the believer from all his sin and 2) there's something we must do ourselves to deal with our sins.

Both of these things are not true, the death of Christ is enough to cleanse “us from all sin” (1 John 1:7) and we are saved by faith alone in Christ alone (Ephesians 2:8-9), not through any work we do or purification we go through.

Alastair Rodger

# Bible Teaching

## Elisha Prophet of Water (Part 12)

By the late Charles Wigg (Tasmania)

### GEHAZI'S GREED

As Gehazi stood by, and listened to these things, and as he witnessed his master's refusal to accept the offered gift, covetousness and greed filled his heart. So he decided to do what Elisha refused to do, and slipped away in pursuit of the group. The General got down from the chariot, and enquired as to what was wrong. Perhaps he was afraid of losing the blessing that he had received? But Gehazi calmed his fears, and told a lying tale so that he might get the money and clothes that Elisha had refused.

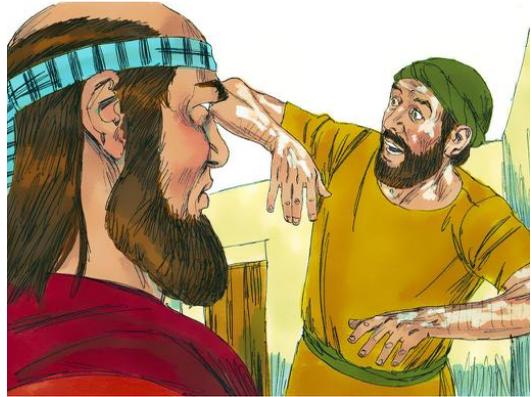


Doubtless greatly relieved, Naaman pressed the greedy Gehazi to take twice as much as he requested, and he was quite willing to do so. Once the ill gotten gain was safely stored in his house, the covetous man came once more and stood before Elisha. When questioned by Elisha as to where he had been, he lied, and said that he had been nowhere. But he was to receive a sentence of judgment from the lips of the prophet. The leprosy of Naaman would cling to him and his seed forever. This should be a warning to all those who pose as God's servants today, who play on the ignorance of carnal Christians, so as to get riches for themselves. However it seems that God must have shown mercy even to Gehazi, because we see him talking to the king of Israel in a later chapter. It seems that God must have granted him

repentance also, that he must have been cleansed, or else he could not have been in the presence of the king.

### NAAMAN'S RETURN

What a joyful home-coming it must have been for Naaman and his house. Just think of the joy that must have filled his soul, as he showed those in his



house the wonder of what God had done for him. How the little maid must have rejoiced also to think that she had been the one that God had used to bring the good news of hope and blessing to her master. I expect that thereafter she would be given an honoured place in that great home.

But what about the king, how did he feel? No doubt he was glad that his general had been healed, but it seems that he did not like the change that had taken place in his character. Naaman could no longer be happy to lead the armies of Syria on expeditions of cruelty, especially against the land of Israel, the place where he had received such blessing. The details of the following chapters in 2 Kings, show that Naaman must have been removed from his place as Commander in Chief of the Syrian army.

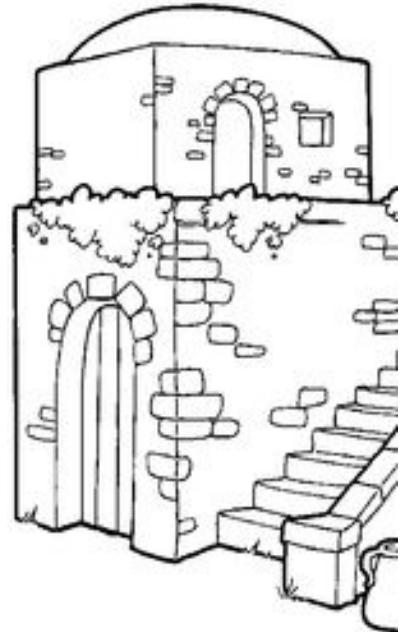
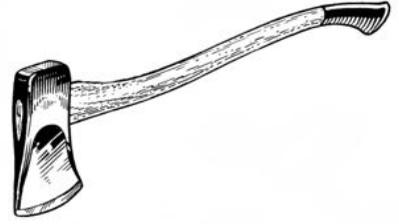
In chapter eight, when Elisha went to Damascus, Naaman was no longer in charge of the armies of Syria, but Hazael was. Perhaps Elisha had heard of what had happened to Naaman and had gone there to visit him, and to comfort him? As he had been removed from his post as Commander in Chief, then he would no longer have to attend the temple of Rimmon, And would not need to bow down in that temple to those idols? So his request about this matter was not needed. What a testimony to God's faithfulness!

## THE BORROWED AXE

Chapter six of 2 Kings begins with the story of the borrowed axe. We are introduced to the sons of the prophets once again, and as we noticed previously, they continue to be people of a carnal nature. Here they are discontented with the place where they were dwelling, and they complained that it was too small for them. The flesh hates smallness or narrowness, and always clamours for largeness, or looseness. It objects to the narrowness of the path that is laid out for the believer in the Word of God.

The path which the Lord Jesus has called us to walk is a narrow path (Matthew 7:14), a path that involves trouble and discomfort, as the Greek word implies. The flesh prefers the broad road, to go with the crowds etc, but it leads down to destruction. We have this problem today, with our modern day 'sons of the prophets' seeking for what they call Mega Churches, and are no longer content with the two or three, that gather to the Lord's name, as the Lord Jesus said. They call us to join hands with this and that, with anything that is called 'Christian', regardless of whether such movements have any love for Christ, or obedience to His Word.

They then approached the prophet with their plan to build a larger place for themselves, and he permitted them to go about their project, but they asked him to go with them, and thereby give support by his presence to their endeavour, and he consented to go. We may wonder at the wisdom of this, and some would even criticise or condemn the prophet for giving credence or support to such a project by being present with them. However the prophet knew that their plans would come to nothing, and sometimes the best way to teach people is to let the make

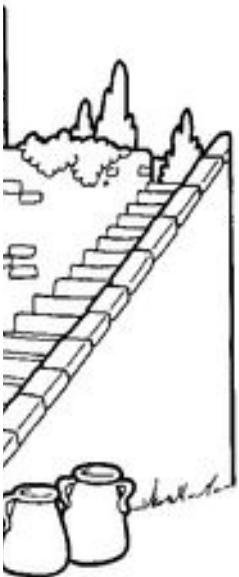


their mistakes, so that they might learn by them.

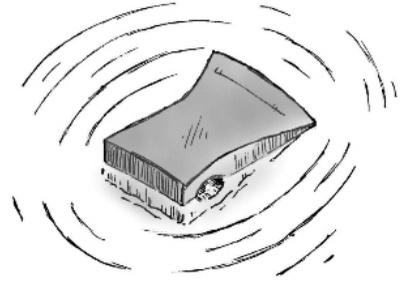
Once they reached the place, or the forest where they were to obtain the timber for their project they set about hacking down the trees that had grown tall and straight in that place. As one was felling a tree that was to be used for a beam, the head of the axe that he was using flew off the handle and fell into the water of the Jordan River. He immediately cried out to the prophet, saying "Alas master! For it was borrowed".

Here then, we have one who was inexperienced, using something that was not his own, something that he had borrowed from another, and the result was disaster. We may presume that it was borrowed from someone at the place that was too small for them. It is the practice of those who are trained in the seminaries of our lands, to do much reading, and to borrow from others, things that they fit into their sermons, when asked to preach. Things that they have never proved, or made their own, things that others have used, things that have cost them nothing. The result sometimes is that the preaching of such sermons brings death, disaster and loss.

John the Baptist was a skilled axeman. He said that (in his preaching), the axe is laid to the root of the trees, and that every tree that does not produce good fruit is cut down and cast into the fire (Luke 3:9). But he had been prepared for such a ministry by spending years alone with God in the wilderness. He had denied himself the luxuries of his time, the luxuries demanded by the religious leaders. He had exercised a rugged self-discipline, and wore the roughest clothes, a garment of camel's hair, with a belt of leather about his loins. Such things are not comfortable to the flesh. Thus he was qualified to use the axe, and the axe that he used was not borrowed from another. We are commanded to 'Buy the truth and sell it not' (Proverbs 23:23), showing that whatever we gain in the knowledge of truth will cost us something.



Elisha then asked, where fell it? He then cut down a stick, and cast it into the water, and the axe head was made to swim. The erring one was then told to take it up to himself. The stick was a young tree, and before the disaster could be fixed, it must be cut down and cast into the Jordan.



I suggest that this speaks to us of the sufferings and death of Christ. He could say through the Psalmist, "Take me not away in the midst of my days" (Psalm 102:24). Isaiah says that He "was cut off out of the land of the living" (Ch. 53:8). Thus the errors that sometimes follow immaturity, and inexperience, have cost the Lord Jesus His sufferings and death. The iron was made to swim, thus was restored to usefulness. Thank God for restoration, for resurrection, but the cost of it all was the surrender of the perfect sinless life of Christ.

The end result seemed to be that those immature people saw their error and mistake, because we never read of that larger place being erected. It seems that their project was abandoned. So the prophet's presence had the desired effect. Though he did not have to resort to rebuke or even correction, yet the desired end was reached, and though sadder, yet wiser because of their mistakes, they returned to their place, after having learned their lesson.

..... to be continued

# Good News

## A GOLDEN VERSE FOR YOU

by Evangelist Robert Surgenor

“I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.” (John 10v9)

HOW LOVELY TO NOTE that when the Lord Jesus speaks of Himself, He uses no lofty imagery; rather He speaks of Himself in comparison to everyday things, so that we have no difficulty in grasping the meaning of His message. In John’s Gospel, chapter 4, He speaks of Himself as Water, in chapter 6 as Bread, and here as the Door. The illustration is simple. The Lord is saying that, just as you pass through a door to enter a building, so by faith in Christ Jesus you can enter into God’s salvation. Perhaps the Lord has spoken of Himself in this way in order that it may often come to our attention! When you enter and leave your own house, you use a door. As you enter a car, you use its door. You pass through a door as you enter a store. Almost everywhere, doors meet your gaze. Our Lord seems to say to you, “I will meet you wherever you are, and I would like you to be reminded wherever you go that I am the door by which you can be saved.”

### GOD’S SALVATION IS A PERSON

Now, I would like you to notice how particular the Lord is in His statement regarding the way of salvation. He does not say, “The church is the door,” neither does He say, “The sacraments are the door,” nor, “Baptism is the door.” Rather, He points to Himself and says, “I am the door.” Peter affirms this truth by saying, “Neither is there salvation in any other” (Acts 4v12). Paul declares, “that in all things He (Christ) might have the preeminence” (Colossians 1v18). Salvation is found only in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, for He said, “I am the door.”

## A POSSIBLE SALVATION

The Lord declares, "by Me if ANY MAN enter in, he shall be saved." How wonderful! Regardless of their colour or condition, the Lord invites all. I remember preaching in a mountain village; a woman who attended those meetings was yearning for God's salvation. However, the devil had convinced her that her life had been too sinful for God to receive her. One night as we spoke of Paul's words, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (1Timothy 1v15), she saw for the first time that if Christ Jesus could save Paul, the chief of sinners, He was willing and able to save her, too! She entered in and was saved! The Lord "is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that ANY should perish, but that ALL should come to repentance" (2Peter 3v9). The blood of Christ can cleanse any sin (1John 1v7). Have you been made wretched through sin? Listen, dear friend, the Saviour beckons you, "if ANY man enter in, he shall be saved."

## A PRESENT SALVATION

Did you ever hear a person say, "You can't know in this life. You have to wait for the judgment to find out where you will be"? Such thinking is "ecclesiastical rubbish" for I search in vain to find such a theory in the Bible. In fact, the Bible tells us just the opposite! "He shall be saved," says the Lord. It doesn't say that he might be, or can hope to be, but, "he SHALL be saved." When? The answer is simple. The very moment he enters the Door, he is saved. When did you receive Christ by entering the Door? When Zacchaeus received the Saviour, the Lord assured him, "THIS DAY is salvation come to this house"(Luke 19v9). Salvation is not obtainable after death. "Now is the day of salvation" (2Corinthians 6v2).

## A PRECIOUS SALVATION

The Hope Diamond is one of the world's most precious gems, yet 10,000 of them couldn't purchase God's salvation. But, thank God,

the cost was met by a Person, the Lord Jesus Christ. "I am the good Shepherd: the good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep" (John 10v11). We are "not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold... But with the precious blood of Christ" (1Peter 1v18,19). Not only is salvation precious because of the price paid to procure it, but also because of its delivering power. Hell awaits the sinner, but God cries, "Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom" (Job 33v24). Faith in Christ saves the soul from hell, judgment, and eternal punishment in the lake of fire. How comforting His words are to those who enter in - "he shall be saved."

### A PERMANENT SALVATION

When the Lord saves a soul, He does a perfect work. Did you ever observe sheep and a shepherd? I have, and one thing I've noticed is that it is always the shepherd who holds the sheep, and never the sheep who holds on to the shepherd. Similarly, in salvation, I'm not holding on to the Shepherd; but thank God, the Shepherd is holding on to me! He has put me on His shoulders, so I'm safe and secure (Luke 15v5)! If you enter the Door, He will assure you with this wonderful fact, "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall NEVER perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" (John 10v28). My friend, the Saviour calls; will you come? Receive Him now and experience His words, "by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me." (John 14v6)

# Design in Creation

By Nitish Patel

## THE MONARCH BUTTERFLY

The Monarch Butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) has a wing span between 9.4 to 10.5 cm, the span of a tea cup and weighs 0.27 to 0.75 g. Its annual migration has been called “one of the greatest natural phenomena in the insect world”.

In late summer, early autumn millions of monarch butterflies head south from Canada to escape the winter. It wasn't until 1975 that researchers from the University of Toronto located their wintering grounds thousands of miles south in Mexico's remote Sierra Madre Mountains. Other monarchs travel down to the warmer climes of Florida or California.

Though the monarch is a long distance migrator like birds, the big difference is that with the butterfly it is a multigenerational one where the final generation reaching back north is not the same which arrived in Mexico.

Around March April, the first generation is born. The butterflies which originally travelled down from Canada mate and eggs are laid on a wild flower known as the milkweed. These eggs hatch four days later and caterpillars (larvae) emerges munching its own shell and the milkweed plant.

The milkweed contains power poisons which are called

cardiac glycoside toxins that are harmless to the monarch but poisonous to its predators. The poisons remain in their bodies even after the larvae metamorphose



into the butterfly making the adults poisonous too! Added to this is their Aposematism, where the pattern and colour of their wings warns predators that they are poisonous and not to be eaten. The caterpillars go through five stages of growth and at each state they moult.

Two weeks later the caterpillar is fully grown and finds a leaf or a stem to attach itself to with silk in order to start the process of metamorphosis to change into a beautiful butterfly. It transforms into a Chrysalis (the pupa state). Though all looks quiet on the outside, within remarkable changes are taking place as the caterpillar dissolves and is transformed into a new creature. After ten days the butterfly emerges and feeding on the nectar of flowers during its short life of 2-8 weeks. All the while it travels north towards Canada.

Before dying this generation mates to produce another generation which flies further up north.

The second generation is born May June, the third during July August but it is the fourth generation born in September October that is unique. This final generation lives much longer for 6-8 months so that it can fly back to Mexico. Here it will live until February March before awakening to

mate, then dying to start the cycle all over again.

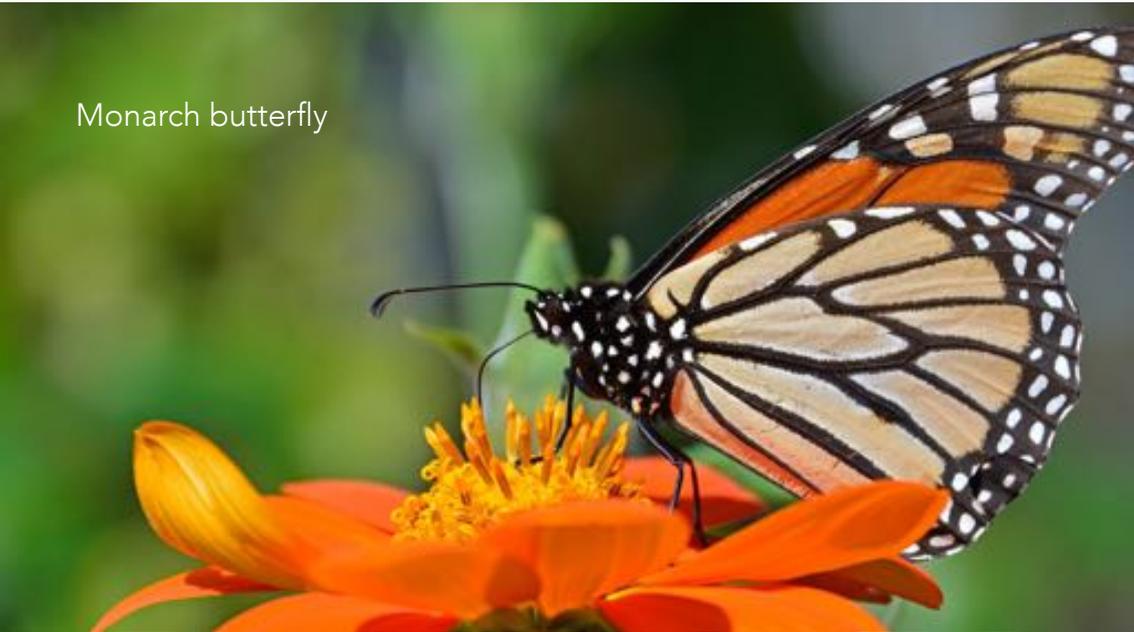
These creatures with a brain the size of a pin head and having no knowledge from past generations are able to navigate thousands of miles and some times even retuning to the very tree their great grandparents were born!

The miracle of metamorphosis, continental navigation, Aposematism, with the reciprocal information in the predator that this creature is not to be eaten, and the fourth generation programed to live longer is truly an amazing example of Divine design and engineering that defies all the naturalistic explanations of the evolutionists with their “just so stories” and “isn’t mother nature wonderful” nonsense! No amount of mutations in the DNA, blind chance, luck and natural selection can create the information that is built into these creatures. Knowledge requires an intelligent Designer.

“O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.” (Psalm 104:24)

A new contender has knocked the monarch off its top position for long distance migration. Recent research has revealed that the British “Painted Lady” (*Vanessa cardui*) butterfly undertakes an even greater journey of 9000 miles from tropical Africa to the Artic Circle, double the distance of the Monarch. The team analysed 60,000 sightings from British observers and high altitude insect-monitoring radar was used to track the butterflies. The research was published in the Journal *Ecography*.

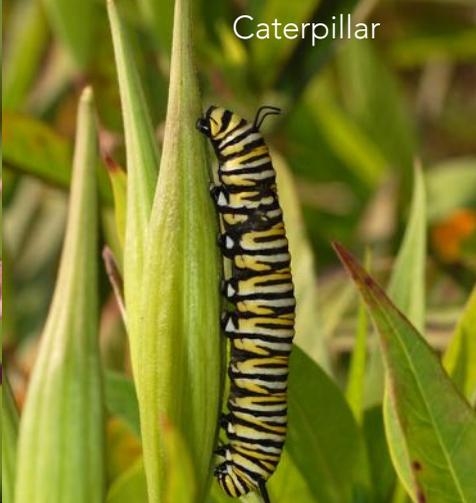
Monarch butterfly



Milkweed



Caterpillar

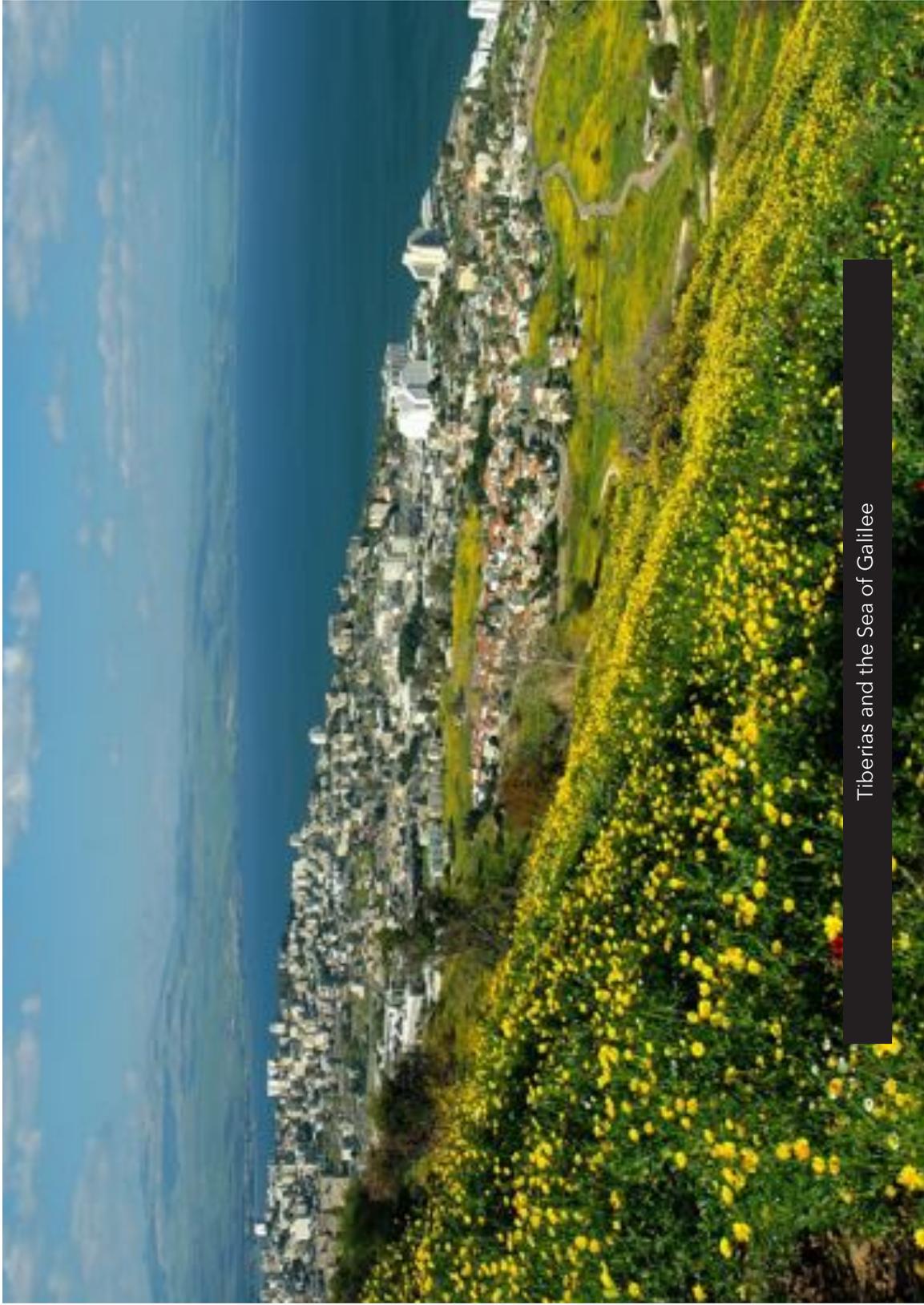


Chrysalis



Egg





Tiberias and the Sea of Galilee